

Kolob Canyon School 1338 East 600 West New Harmony, Utah 84757

June 27, 2005





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Kolob Canyon School 1338 East 600 West New Harmony, Utah 84757

June 27, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Kolob Canyon School Administration and Staff	1
Kolob Canyon School Mission Statement and Belief Statements	2
Members of the Visiting Team	3
Chapter 1: School Profile	4
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry	4
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	5
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	5
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	6
Curriculum Development	7
Quality Instructional Design	7
Quality Assessment Systems	7
Leadership for School Improvement	8
Community Building	8
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	9
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI	9
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	11
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	12

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, June 27, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Kolob Canyon School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Stefanie Trimmer, Education Director, is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Kolob Canyon School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Kolob Canyon School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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KOLOB CANYON SCHOOL

Administration

Kent Tasso	Facility Assistant I	Owner, Business Director Director and Clinical Director Program Director Education Director Office Manager	
Therapeutic Staff			
Kristy Benton Susan Garner Marsha Payton Kristi Seymour	The	Dietician Play Therapist Nurse Prapist and Equine Coordinator	
Educational Staff			
Michael Clark	Consulting Administrator, Librarian Spanish Teacher Science Teacher Math Teacher English and Social Studies Teacher Drama Teacher Equine Assistant Guidance Counselor		
Support Staff			
Day Line Staff Holly O'Driscoll Yanavey An Annie Lee Brook Blood	Tana Excell Lacey Larsen Andrea Christensen Jeanette Smith Graveyard Line Staff	On-Call Line Staff Kristina Jenson Brook Christian Ashley Price Emily Chappell	

Dana Hewitt

Maintenance Jason Morrill

Adam Powell

Kristy Powell Alyshia Jenkins Michelle Stapleton

Annette Rigby

Swing Line Staff
Mary Cottrell

Wendi Tullis

KOLOB CANYON SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Kolob Canyon School is to promote a supportive educational atmosphere that assists students in seeing the significance of their own life decisions that will affect their future in how they approach life.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

- Each student can flourish academically in a supportive educational environment.
- Our students can learn to imagine their future in terms of success and not failure.
- All students can relate their levels of investment and effort to their success.
- All students can find education and learning enjoyable for life.
- Students learn more productively through teaching in the multiple intelligence approach.
- Each student becomes a leader through personal growth, and the mentoring of others.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ralph P. Vander Heide, Ph.D., Consultant in School Accreditation, Visiting Team Chairperson

Judith H. Vander Heide, M.S., Consultant in School Accreditation

VISITING TEAM REPORT

KOLOB CANYON SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Kolob Canyon Residential Treatment Center was the vision of Kent Tasso and Scott Davis. Mr. Davis had worked in the field of residential treatment for many years and was instrumental in the early development of New Haven Residential Treatment Center in the Salt Lake City area. Mr. Tasso had worked in the education field in various states, as well as in the area of software sales for residential treatment centers. These two men eventually began working together for the same company and found that they shared the same vision of helping young people. In November 2001, Certified Educational Recreational Therapeutic Schools (CERTS) was developed, and Kolob Canyon Residential Treatment Center was begun as their first program in the New Harmony valley. As this property was purchased and plans were being made, many local residents were very angry about this program for clinically depressed girls and began to vandalize the property. However, this attitude has changed. On March 2, 2002 Kolob Canyon Residential Treatment Center received its first student, and has been receiving students since that day. Today CERTS has three residential treatment programs and one therapeutic boarding school, and is continuing to help young women achieve their potential as they overcome behavioral issues.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The school discovered significant findings about each student, since each is carefully profiled in order to individualize instruction to the extent possible and to help students with their psychological and behavioral issues. The Visiting Team notes that Kolob adequately portrays the school population, environment, curriculum, and other relevant information about the school, with emphasis on its mission, philosophy, and educational and rehabilitative direction for each student.

The school's analysis of the profile includes the identification of its strengths and limitations, and for the most part it provides a description of the "big picture" about the performance of the school. Profile information was used in drafting the school's improvement plan.

The Visiting Team notes that in preparing the profile the school followed the guidelines of the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) and the NSSE handbook, *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance*, as well as the Utah accreditation handbook, *Collaborating for Student Achievement*.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team commends the profile information that is given. For example, the types of behavioral disorders are listed and briefly explained: self-harm, compulsivity, body dysmorphia, gang behavior, oppositional defiance, and negative behaviors. More examples of data include academic skill level at entrance, student and community demographics, ethnicity of students, family systems, what kind of school students come from, referral sources, and more information about the young women.

The school is reminded to continue to put its best foot forward and to profile thoroughly.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The faculty and staff at Kolob believe parents are an integral part of the program and an essential element of the therapeutic process. At times there have been some misunderstandings between the owners and those who work in education, but these issues are being resolved.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

This has been described in Chapter 1 above.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Kolob School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

- Communication Skills
- Thinking and Reasoning Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

The school analyzed students' learning needs and determined the current level of achievement of the DRSLs. Those current levels are listed and described in the self-

study. For example: "Due to defiance disorders, students have great difficulty accepting others' differences in opinion and belief" (relates to DRSL 3, Interpersonal Skills). The Visiting Team commends the school for using this analysis in choosing appropriate DRSLs and aligning them with students' learning needs.

Indicators of what should be achieved for each DRSL are given in the goals of the three action plans (one for each DRSL).

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

Kolob Canyon School is to be commended for its collaborative effort. A focus group was established and committee members met regularly as part of the self-study process. Beliefs, mission, and DRSLs were a result of the collaborative approach. The mission statement describes a compelling purpose and direction for the school.

The educational personnel report that owners do not always participate in developing a "shared vision" with them (see Chapter 2). However, the Visiting Team feels confident (after discussing this with owners and staff) that true collaboration by all stakeholders is being endorsed by owners and management. The owners understand the holistic accreditation process.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

This has been well accomplished (see the list of beliefs at the beginning of this report). The school beliefs address key issues pertinent to effective decision-making and policy development. It appears that the implications of the school's belief statements and the level of the school's conviction to act upon the beliefs have been considered prior to finalizing the list of beliefs.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The mission and beliefs align as recommended by NSSE. The Visiting Team observed that the analysis of students' learning needs takes into account the profile data and related assessment and evaluation measures of student learning. The expectations for student learning reflect meaningful and appropriately challenging goals. They are free of jargon, and all stakeholders can understand the clear and concise language.

Curriculum Development:

- a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?
 - The curriculum is based on the Utah Core, and teachers work together to meet and modify the core as needed for the school's unique population. The Utah Life Skills are a part of the curriculum. Standards for appropriate learning for the students' varying abilities guide the development of curriculum.
- b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

See above. All faculty members concur in focusing on the school-wide DRSLs as part of their teaching assignment.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?
 - Teachers have learned that they must be creative and innovative with this student population, and help with the rehabilitation of students as well as their academic needs. Teachers are very much aware that instructional time must be protected and appropriately allocated to support learning. The Visiting Team encourages the teaching staff to continue and to improve this endeavor.
- b) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?
 - The students engage in several appropriate "additional opportunities" and community service projects, as well as activities that directly support the curriculum. The school provides opportunities for students to improve and enrich their learning through expanded use of time, facilities, and instructional resources.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The development of assessments of student learning is based on a definition of the type of achievement to be assessed and the performance standards for evaluating the quality of students' achievement. Assessment is both formative and summative. It appeared to the Visiting Team that assessments are fair and equitable. Teachers attempt to individualize assessment.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The school leadership comprises educational leaders who understand the importance of promoting and fostering quality instruction. The "consulting principal" or "off-campus principal" who works with the on-campus administrator does not visit the school every day, but he makes regularly scheduled appearances and is frequently in telephone contact with the school.

The leadership encourages decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and individualized. Administrators (see list in the front of this report) provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. They constantly monitor the work of the teachers and check on the progress of the students.

The school leadership promotes quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

As noted throughout this report, community building is part of the ethos of Kolob. Positive and productive working relationships are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school participates in community projects and service learning, which is an integral part of the program.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

Professional development is provided as needs are perceived and funds allow.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The school is committed to progressive change. Of course, a principle concern is to help these youngsters with their personal problems in order that they may better achieve academically.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

Kolob Canyon School meets all four sections of this standard. The educational program is aligned with the mission statement and beliefs. The Visiting Team observed that the vision for the school has been collaboratively developed (with owners increasing their participation in the process). The instructional and organizational practices, as well as the policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society. The program of studies meets the requirements of the state.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

All three sections of this standard are met. Personnel services are designed to give appropriate systematic assistance to students, as called for in the subsections of the requirements. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled (there are only 12 students at the school). The primary objective of the counseling program is to promote and enhance the academic and personal development of students and to prepare them for post-high school experiences.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a

positive educational atmosphere. It provides for the health and safety of students and all school faculty and personnel.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

The school meets this standard. The school library media program is a resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. It contributes to the achievement of the DRSLs. A certified library media teacher (part-time consultant) provides assistance. Sufficient funds are provided each year to meet the library/media needs of students and teachers. Further upgrading and improvements to the library should be a priority of the school.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interest of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

The five sections of this standard are met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school. Systematic analysis of data regarding the performance of students has been incorporated into the comprehensive school improvement process, as has ongoing examination of instructional practices. The plan is updated and adjusted each year in alignment with perceived needs.

Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are endorsed or properly (temporarily) exempted for the subjects they are teaching.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of KCS provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary and required administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or NAAS.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. The school supports activities that supplement and augment the basic instructional program by providing additional enriching experiences for students consistent with the school's mission and beliefs. Attention is paid to providing equal opportunities.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature appear to be completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The action plan appears to be adequate and understood by all stakeholders. There is school-wide commitment to the action plan, and follow-up procedures are sound. The Visiting Team assumes that the plan will achieve the desired outcomes. School personnel, with the promised cooperation of owners and management, intend to change and modify it as needed.

The action plan directly aligns with the DRSLs. The NSSE handbook has been consulted as a model for formatting. The school has followed the excellent explanation of "alignment" given in that handbook.

The recommended format is to have complete alignment (profiling—establishing beliefs—mission statement derived from beliefs—analysis of how the school is operating—establishment of DRSLs based on profiling, mission, and beliefs—an action plan that addresses the DRSLs).

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends all personnel and students for their hospitality and cooperation with the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team commends all personnel for their honesty concerning the academic programs at Kolob Canyon and for their willingness to improve.
- The Visiting Team commends the school personnel for their enthusiasm and apparent devotion to improving the lives of the students (i.e., for their commitment to the mission statement and beliefs).
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, therapists, and faculty for their practice of holding regular meetings to discuss all aspects of the ongoing program of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends all the school personnel for their efforts to design IEPs for the students as needed, and for fostering a nurturing but goal-directed atmosphere.
- The Visiting Team commends the school personnel for providing opportunities in service learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the teachers for the examples of competent teaching that the Visiting Team observed.
- The Visiting Team commends the owners for the improved landscaping and upgrading of the buildings at this beautiful site.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that in future self-studies the school profile offer even more information and data, including follow-up studies on students who have completed their stay at Kolob Canyon.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all personnel continue to work as a team on all aspects of the program. It is vital that owners, management, and teachers cooperate fully.

• The Visiting Team recommends that the owners and administration continue to make great efforts to involve parents in school improvement. (The Visiting Team recognizes that this is difficult.)

Lastly, the school is reminded that accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the school. A primary purpose of accreditation is to protect the public trust. Accreditation promotes voluntary self-regulation, and is a means of showing confidence in a school's performance (i.e., demonstrating that both quantitative and qualitative standards have been established). An ultimate objective of the self-study and accreditation process should be that schools institutionalize the process of reflective inquiry and thereby become internally responsible for the maintenance of standards—even the creation of standards. The Visiting Team anticipates that Kolob Canyon will continue the process of self-evaluation and ongoing improvement.